Claims

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1. A method for gathering information on a state of a computer system, said method comprising:

providing a dictionary file having a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining state information on said computer system, said plurality of inquiries being organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said state information, at least one group of said at least one subject group having multiple records of inquiry; and

processing at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries of said dictionary file to accumulate said state information, said processing comprising for each group of said at least one group having multiple records of inquiry:

processing a record of said multiple records of inquiry, and if a condition of said record is satisfied then terminating processing of said group, otherwise processing a next record of said multiple records of inquiry and continuing until a condition of one record of said multiple records of inquiry is satisfied or all records of said multiple records of inquiry of said group have been processed.

- The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one subject group comprises multiple subject groups, and wherein said processing of each group of said at least one group having multiple records of inquiry comprises proceeding to a next group of said multiple subject groups when said condition of one record of said multiple records of inquiry in said at least one group is satisfied.
- 3. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some inquiries of said plurality of inquiries comprise instructions, each instruction providing a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising collecting results of said instructions into a file, said file being representative of said state of said computer system.
- 5. The method of claim 4, wherein each inquiry of said plurality of inquiries is an instruction which provides a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 1 6. The method of claim 4, wherein said processing
 2 comprises processing each group of said at least one subject
 3 group, and wherein said method further comprises transferring
 4 said file to an information repository coupled to said
 5 computer system across a network.
- 7. The method of claim 6, wherein said computer system comprises one computer system of a plurality of computer systems coupled to said network.

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- 1 \ 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said dictionary file 2 comprises a rules database in an ASCII file.
- 9. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one record of inquiry of said multiple records of inquiry comprises an instruction which provides a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied, said result comprising state information for said group having said record when the condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein said computer system 2 comprises one computer system within a network of computer 3 systems, and wherein said providing comprises reading said 4 dictionary file from a server coupled to said network of 5 computer systems to said one computer system to gather said 6 state information thereon.
- 1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising
 2 forwarding results representative of gathered state
 3 information to an information repository coupled to said
 4 network of computer systems, said information repository
 5 residing at said server system providing said dictionary
 6 file.
- 12. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing
 comprises processing each group of said at least one subject
 group, and setting group substitution variables for output
 upon initiation of processing of each group of said at least
 one subject group.

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1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein said multiple 2 records of inquiry of said at least one group comprise at 3 least one of a file check inquiry, a file content check 4 inquiry, an external process check inquiry, or a default 5 inquiry for said group.

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1	ackslash 14. The method of claim 1, wherein said plurality of
2 in	quaries comprise multiple inquiry types, and wherein said
3 mu	ltiple inquiry types comprise at least some of:
4	\ a file inquiry which checks for existence of a file
5	of a certain date, time or size and which can return
6	file information;
7	an\INI file inquiry which checks for a certain
8	application, variable and value, and which can return a
9	certain value or one or more variables and values;
10	an ASCI, file inquiry which checks for a certain
11	character string in a file, and which can return
12	information on a line within the character string;
13	a registry inquiry which checks for a certain
14	registry tree or value, and which can return one or more
15	values in a tree or\sub-tree;
16	an external process inquiry using an INI output,
17	which comprises executing an external process and
18	performing an INI file inquiry on the result;
19	an external process inquiry which executes an
20	external process, provides an ASCII output, and performs
21	an ASCII file inquiry on the result;
22	an external process inquiry using a registry, which
23	executes an external process and performs a registry
24	inquiry on the result; and
25	multiple inquiries which comprise a combination of
26	multiple other inquiry types, where all must succeed.
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1 5. A method for gathering information on a state of a computer system, said method comprising:

providing a dictionary file having a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining said state information on said computer system, at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries comprising an instruction having a result which is output when a condition of said instruction is satisfied; and

processing at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries of said dictionary file to accumulate said state information, said processing comprising for each instruction, outputting said result of said instruction from said dictionary file when said condition of said instruction is satisfied, wherein said state information on said computer system comprises outputted results from satisfaction of said at least one instruction.

- 1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said at least one 2 inquiry comprising said instruction comprises multiple 3 inquiries of said plurality of inquiries, each instruction 4 having a result which is output when a condition of said 5 instruction is satisfied.
- 1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising 2 collecting results of said instructions into a file, said 3 file being representative of said state of the computer 4 system.
- 18. The method of claim 17, wherein each inquiry of 2 said plurality of inquiries is an instruction which provides 3 a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.

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- 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said computer system comprises one computer system of a plurality of computer systems coupled to said network.
- 1 21. The method of claim 15, wherein said dictionary 2 file comprises a rules database defined in an ASCII file.
- 1 22. The method of claim 15, wherein said computer 2 system comprises one computer system within a network of 3 computer systems, and wherein said providing comprises 4 reading said dictionary file from a server coupled to said 5 network to said one computer system to gather said state 6 information thereon.
- 1 23. The method of claim 22, wherein said reading of 2 said dictionary file is performed by an inquiry tool routine 3 located on said one computer system.
- 24. The method of claim 22, further comprising forwarding results representative of gathered state information to an information repository of said network of computer systems, said information repository residing at said server providing said dictionary file.
- 25. The method of claim 15, wherein said plurality of inquiries comprise at least one of a file check inquiry, a file content check inquiry, an external process check inquiry, or a default inquiry.

1	ackslash 26. The method of claim 15, wherein said plurality of
2	inquiries comprise multiple inquiry types, and wherein said
3	multiple inquiry types comprise at least some of:
4	ackslash a file inquiry which checks for existence of a file
5	of a certain date, time or size and which can return
6	file information;
7	an INI file inquiry which checks for a certain
8	application, variable and value, and which can return a
9	certain value, or one or more variables and values;
10	an ASCII tile inquiry which checks for a certain
11	character string in a file, and which can return
12	information on a line within the character string;
13	a registry inquiry which checks for a certain
14	registry tree or value, and which can return one or more
15	values in a tree or sub tree;
16	an external process inquiry using an INI output,
17	which comprises executing an external process and
18	performing an INI file inquiry on the result;
19	an antanal manager in maintain abigh angultag an
	an external process inquiry which executes an
20	external process, provides an ASCII output, and performs
21	an ASCII file inquiry on the result;
22	an external process inquiry using a registry, which
23	executes an external process and performs a registry
24	inquiry on the result; and
25	multiple inquiries which comprise a\combination of
26	multiple other inquiry types, where all must succeed.

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The method of claim 15, wherein said plurality of 1 2 inquiries are organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said 3 4 state\information, at least one group of the at least one subject group having multiple instructions, and processing 5 each instruction of each group of the at least one group having multiple instructions such that if a condition of the 7 instruction is satisfied then terminating processing of the 8 group, otherwise processing a next instruction of the 9 multiple instructions within the group and continuing until a 10 condition of one instruction of the multiple instructions is 11 satisfied or until all instructions of the multiple 12 instructions of the group have been processed. 13

28. A memory for storing a dictionary file data structure, the dictionary file data structure facilitating gathering of information on a state of a computer system, the dictionary file data structure comprising:

a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining state information on the computer system, said plurality of inquiries being organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said state information, at least one group of the at least one subject group having multiple records of inquiry; and

wherein the multiple records of inquiry of the at least one group comprise multiple instructions, each instruction comprising a result to be output when a condition of said instruction is satisfied, wherein outputting of a result from one instruction terminates processing of said at least one group having multiple records of inquiry.

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1	29. A memory for storing a dictionary file data
2	structure, the dictionary file data structure facilitating
3	gathering information on a state of a computer system, the
4	dictionary file data structure comprising:

a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining said state information on said computer system, at least one inquiry of the plurality of inquiries comprising an instruction having a result which is output when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.

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1 30. A system for gathering information on a state of a computer system, said system comprising:

means for providing a dictionary file having a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining state information on said computer system, said plurality of inquiries being organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said state information, at least one group of said at least one subject group having multiple records of inquiry; and

means for processing at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries of said dictionary file to accumulate said state information, said means for processing comprises for each group of said at least one group having multiple records of inquiry:

means for processing a record of said multiple records of inquiry, and if a condition of said record is satisfied then for terminating processing of said group, otherwise for processing a next record of said multiple records of inquiry and continuing until a condition of one record of said multiple records of inquiry is satisfied or all records of said multiple records of inquiry of said group have been processed.

- 31. The system of claim 30, wherein said at least one subject group comprises multiple subject groups, and wherein said means for processing of each group of said at least one group having multiple records of inquiry comprises means for proceeding to a next group of said multiple subject groups when said condition of one record of said multiple records of inquiry in said at least one group is satisfied.
- 32. The system of claim 30, wherein at least some inquiries of said plurality of inquiries comprise instructions, each instruction providing a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 33. The system of claim 32, further comprising means
 for collecting results of said instructions into a file, said
 file being representative of said state of said computer
 system.
- 1 34. The system of claim 33, wherein each inquiry of 2 said plurality of inquiries is an instruction which provides 3 a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 35. The system of claim 33, wherein said means for processing comprises means for processing each group of said at least one subject group, and wherein said system further comprises means for transferring said file to an information repository coupled to said computer system across a network.
- 1 36. The system of claim 35, wherein said computer 2 system comprises one computer system of a plurality of 3 computer systems coupled to said network.

- The system of claim 30, wherein said dictionary file comprises a rules database in an ASCII file.
- 1 38. The system of claim 30, wherein said means for 2 processing comprises means for processing each group of said 3 at least one subject group, and means for setting group 4 substitution variables for output upon initiation of 5 processing of each group of said at least one subject group.
- 39. The system of claim 30, wherein said multiple records of inquiry of said at least one group comprise at least one of a file check inquiry, a file content check inquiry, an external process check inquiry, or a default inquiry for said group.
- 40. The system of claim 30, wherein said plurality of inquiries comprise multiple inquiry types, and wherein said multiple inquiry types comprise at least some of:
- a file inquiry which checks for existence of a file of a certain date, time or sixe and which can return file information;
- an INI file inquiry which checks for a certain

 application, variable and value, and which can return a

 certain value or one or more variables and values;
- an ASCII file inquiry which checks for a certain character string in a file, and which can return information on a line within the character string;

	13	a registry inquiry which checks for a certain
	14	registry tree or value, and which can return one or more
	15	values in a tree or sub-tree;
	16	an external process inquiry using an INI output,
	17	which comprises executing an external process and
	18	performing and INI file inquiry on the result;
	19	an external process inquiry which executes an
	20	external process provides an ASCII output, and performs
	21	an ASCII file inquiry on the result;
	22	an external process inquiry using a registry, which
<u>.</u> :	23	executes an external process and performs a registry
	24	inquiry on the result; and
	25	multiple inquiries which comprise a combination of
	26	multiple other inquiry types where all must succeed.
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1 4. A system for gathering information on a state of a 2 computer system, said system comprising:

means for providing a dictionary file having a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining said state information on said computer system, at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries comprising an instruction having a result which is output when a condition of said instruction is satisfied; and

means for processing said at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries of said dictionary file to accumulate said state information, said means for processing comprising for each instruction, means for outputting said result of said instruction from said dictionary file when said condition of said instruction is satisfied, wherein said state information on said computer system comprises any outputted results from satisfaction of said at least one instruction.

- 42. The system of claim 41, wherein said at least one inquiry comprising said instruction comprises multiple inquiries of said plurality of inquiries, each instruction having a result which is output when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 1 43. The system of claim 42, further comprising means 2 for collecting results of said instructions into a file, said 3 file being representative of said state of the computer 4 system.

- 1 44. The system of claim 43, wherein each inquiry of 2 said plurality of inquiries is an instruction which provides 3 a result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 1 45. The system of claim 43, further comprising means 2 for transferring said file to an information repository 3 coupled to said computer system across a network.
- 1 46. The system of claim 45, wherein said computer 2 system comprises one computer system of a plurality of 3 computer systems coupled to said network.
- 1 47. The system of claim 41, wherein said dictionary 2 file comprises a rules database defined in an ASCII file.
- 1 48. The system of claim 41, wherein said plurality of 2 inquiries comprise at least one of a file check inquiry, a 3 file content check inquiry, an external process check 4 inquiry, or a default inquiry.
- 1 49. The system of claim 41 wherein said plurality of 2 inquiries comprise multiple inquiry types, and wherein said 3 multiple inquiry types comprise at least some of:
- a file inquiry which checks for existence of a file
 of a certain date, time or size and which can return
 file information;
- an INI file inquiry which checks for a certain

 application, variable and value, and which can return a

 certain value, or one or more variables and values;

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	10	an ASCII file inquiry which checks for a certain
	11	character string in a file, and which can return
	12	information on a line within the character string;
	13	a registry inquiry which checks for a certain
	14	registry\tree or value, and which can return one or more
	15	values in\a tree or sub-tree;
	16	an external process inquiry using an INI output,
	17	which comprises executing an external process and
	18	performing an LNI file inquiry on the result;
]	19	an external process inquiry which executes an
:	20	external process, provides an ASCII output, and performs
:	21	an ASCII file inquiry on the result;
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Ī	22	an external process inquiry using a registry, which
	23	executes an external process and performs a registry
Ē.	24	inquiry on the result; and
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1	25	multiple inquiries which comprise a combination of
	26	multiple other inquiry types, where all must succeed.
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The system of claim 41, wherein said plurality of 1 inquiries are organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said state information, at least one group of the at least one subject group having multiple instructions, and said system 5 comprising means for processing each instruction of each 7 group of the at least one group having multiple instructions such that if a condition of the instruction is satisfied 8 processing of the group is terminated, otherwise a next instruction of the multiple instructions within the group is 10 11 processed and continuing until a condition of one instruction of the multiple instructions is satisfied or until all instructions of the multiple instructions of the group have 13 been processed. 14

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1 51. At least one program storage device readable by a 2 machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of 3 instructions executable by the machine to perform a method 4 for gathering information on a state of a computer system, 5 said method comprising:

providing a dictionary file having a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining state information on said computer system, said plurality of inquiries being organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said state information, at least one group of said at least one subject group having multiple records of inquiry; and

processing at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries of said dictionary file to accumulate said state information, said processing comprising for each group of said at least one group having multiple records of inquiry:

processing a record of said multiple records of inquiry, and if a condition of said record is satisfied then terminating processing of said group, otherwise processing a next record of said multiple records of inquiry and continuing until a condition of one record of said multiple records of inquiry is satisfied or all records of said multiple records of inquiry of said group have been processed.

- 52. The at least one program storage device of claim
 the subject groups, and wherein said processing of each
 group of said at least one group having multiple records of
 inquiry comprises proceeding to a next group of said multiple
 subject groups when said condition of one record of said
 multiple records of inquiry in said at least one group is
 satisfied.
- 53. The at least one program storage device of claim
 2 51, wherein at least some inquiries of said plurality of
 3 inquiries comprise instructions, each instruction providing a
 4 result when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.
- 54. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, further comprising collecting results of said instructions into a file, said file being representative of 4 said state of said computer system.
- 55. The at least one program storage device of claim
 54, wherein each inquiry of said plurality of inquiries is an
 instruction which provides a result when a condition of said
 instruction is satisfied.
- 56. The at least one program storage device of claim
 54, wherein said processing comprises processing each group
 of said at least one subject group, and wherein said method
 further comprises transferring said file to an information
 repository coupled to said computer system across a network.

1	57. The at least one program storage device of claim
2	56, wherein said computer system comprises one computer
3	system of a plurality of computer systems coupled to said
4	network.
1	58. The at least one program storage device of claim
2	51, wherein\said dictionary file comprises a rules database
3	in an ASCII file.
1	59. The at least one program storage device of claim
2	51, wherein said multiple records of inquiry of said at least
3	one group comprise at least one of a file check inquiry, a
4	file content check inquiry, an external process check
5	inquiry, or a default inquiry for said group.
1	60. The at least one program storage device of claim
2	51, wherein said plurality of inquiries comprise multiple
3	inquiry types, and wherein said multiple inquiry types
4	comprise at least some of:
5	a file inquiry which checks for existence of a file
6	of a certain date, time or size and which can return
7	file information;
8	an INI file inquiry which checks for a certain
9	application, variable and value, and which can return a
10	certain value or one or more variables and values;
10	Cercain value of one of more variables and values;
11	an ASCII file inquiry which checks for a certain
12	character string in a file, and which can return

information on a line within the character string;

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	14	a registry inquiry which checks for a certain
	15	registry tree or value, and which can return one or more
	16	values in a tree or sub-tree;
	17	an external process inquiry using an INI output,
	18	which comprises executing an external process and
	19	performing an INI file inquiry on the result;
	20	an external process inquiry which executes an
	21	external process, provides an ASCII output, and performs
	22	an ASCII file inquiry on the result;
1	23	an external process inquiry using a registry, which
= = =	24	executes an external process and performs a registry
= = =	25	inquiry on the result; and
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]	26	multiple inquiries which comprise a combination of
i 9 1	27	multiple other inquiry types, where all must succeed.
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At least one program storage device readable by a machine tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for gathering information on a state of a computer system, said method comprising:

providing a dictionary file having a plurality of inquiries for ascertaining said state information on said computer system, at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries comprising an instruction having a result which is output when a condition of said instruction is satisfied; and

processing at least one inquiry of said plurality of inquiries of said dictionary file to accumulate said state information, said processing comprising for each instruction, outputting said result of said instruction from said dictionary file when said condition of said instruction is satisfied, wherein said state information on said computer system comprises outputted results from satisfaction of said at least one instruction.

1 62. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 61, wherein said at least one inquiry comprising said
3 instruction comprises multiple inquiries of said plurality of
4 inquiries, each instruction having a result which is output
5 when a condition of said instruction is satisfied.

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- 2 62, further comprising collecting results of said
- 3 instructions into a file, said file being representative of
- 4 said state of the computer system.
- 1 64. The at least one program storage device of claim
- 2 63, wherein each inquiry of said plurality of inquiries is an
- 3 instruction which provides a result when a condition of said
- 4 instruction is satisfied.
- 1 65. The at least one program storage device of claim
- 2 63, further comprising transferring said file to an
- 3 information repository coupled to said computer system across
- 4 a network.
- 1 66. The at least one program storage device of claim
- 2 65, wherein said computer system comprises one computer
- 3 system of a plurality of computer systems coupled to said
- 4 network.
- 1 67. The at least one program storage device of claim
- 2 61, wherein said dictionary file comprises a rules database
- 3 defined in an ASCII file.
- 1 68. The at least one program storage device of claim
- 2 61, wherein said plurality of inquiries comprise at least one
- 3 of a file check inquiry, a file content\check inquiry, an
- 4 external process check inquiry, or a default inquiry.

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1	69. The at least one program storage device of claim
2	61, wherein said plurality of inquiries comprise multiple
3	inquiry types, and wherein said multiple inquiry types
4	comprise at least some of:
5	a fale inquiry which checks for existence of a file
6	of a certain date, time or size and which can return
7	file information;
8	an INI file inquiry which checks for a certain
9	application, variable and value, and which can return a
10	certain value, or one or more variables and values;
11	an ASCII file inquiry which checks for a certain
12	character string in a file, and which can return
13	information on a line within the character string;
14	a registry inquiry which checks for a certain
15	registry tree or value, and which can return one or more
16	values in a tree or sub-tree; $ackslash$
17	an external process inquiry\using an INI output,
18	which comprises executing an external process and
19	performing an INI file inquiry on the result;
20	an external process inquiry which executes an
21	external process, provides an ASCII output, and performs
22	an ASCII file inquiry on the result; $igwedge$
23	an external process inquiry using a registry, which
24	executes an external process and performs a registry
25	inquiry on the result; and $igwedge$

26 multiple inquiries which comprise a combination of 27 multiple other inquiry types, where all must succeed.

1 The at least one program storage device of claim 2 61, wherein said plurality of inquiries are organized into at least one subject group, each subject group being directed to a different piece of said state information, at least one 4 group of the at least one subject group having multiple instructions, and processing each instruction of each group 7 of the at least one group having multiple instructions such that if a condition of the instruction is satisfied then 8 terminating processing of the group, otherwise processing a 9 10 next instruction of the multiple instructions within the 11 group and continuing until \a condition of one instruction of the multiple instructions is satisfied or until all 12 instructions of the multiple instructions of the group have 13 been processed.

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